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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DD/A Registry
84-3182/1

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ER 84-9509

Mr. Nicholas C. Burckel
Chairman, Joint Committee on
Historians and Archivists
Joseph Regenstein Library
University of Chicago
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Mr. Burckel:

I have a great deal of sympathy for the views that you expressed on behalf of the Joint Committee on Historians and Archivists in your letter of 19 October. I join you and the Congress in admiring the Department of State's distinguished series, The Foreign Relations of the United States, and I recognize its important role in informing the American people about their government's foreign policy.

We at CIA take seriously our relatively small but unique role in helping the Department of State compile this series. Our principal contribution is to provide their historians with CIA documents at the outset of their work on each volume, and at the end to review for possible declassification those CIA documents they propose to print.

The History Staff in my office arranges access for Department of State historians to classified CIA-originated documents they wish to see either here, at the several Presidential Libraries, or in other official repositories. After these historians select the CIA documents they wish, our History Staff arranges for their review. We make available--ordinarily at the original classification level--as many of these documents as we possibly can to the Department historians, who can then consider the documents for use in the Foreign Relations volumes. We later receive and review for possible declassification those CIA documents that the Department of State proposes to include in each Foreign Relations volume.

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Since these volumes often run to thousands of pages, coordinating the declassification review within the CIA has not been an easy task. In 1978, to reduce the time spent in this process, the declassification review procedure was modified to improve control and increase efficiency. This reduced the time we needed to review the manuscripts and eliminated many earlier problems. Since 1978 we believe that our record for timely responses to the Department of State on the Foreign Relations of the United States series has been quite good, but we will make a special effort to improve our response time even more.

Fully recognizing the important contribution that the Foreign Relations series makes to scholarship and a well-informed public, we carefully weigh the historical value of information against the need to protect our national security interests. This is not to say that when we are in doubt that we automatically declassify, but we do give as full consideration as possible to the opposing equity--enlightenment of the American public.

Sincerely,

/s/ William J. Casey

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

DDA/OIS/CRD [redacted] (31 October 1984) STAT
Retyped: (02 November 1984)

Distribution:
Orig - Addressee
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

ROUTING SLIP

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		SUSPENSE	1 Nov Date			

Remarks

To C: Please prepare response for the DCI's signature.
Response arrived in DDA From OIS, 1 Nov
Typo's gave till 2 Nov 84. JP

Executive Secretary

25 Oct 84
Date

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AHA OAH SAA Joint Committee on Historians and Archivists

American Historical Association
Organization of American Historians
Society of American Archivists

Joseph Regenstein Library
University of Chicago
1100 E. 57th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
October 19, 1984

Executive Registry
84-9509

The Honorable
William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

At a recent meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, this Joint Committee reaffirmed the strong interest of its three parent organizations in maintaining the high standards of the distinguished documentary series, Foreign Relations of the United States, which is prepared by the Department of State in cooperation with other departments and agencies. This widely-respected series, now in its 123rd year, has been called "the historical voice of America" in recognition of its important contributions to international scholarship and to the enlightenment of the American public. It provides invaluable support to the people's right to obtain, within reasonable time limits, specific knowledge of the policies and actions of their elected government.

Foreign Relations volumes are currently being published for the years 1952-1954, the late Truman and early Eisenhower administrations. Not all the volumes for these years have been declassified, however, and there is great concern at the widening gap -- now thirty years, or more -- between actual events and the opening of the documents recording these events. This is seen in the conference report on the Authorization Act for the Department of State for Fiscal 1984 and 1985 (PL 98-164), which states: "The Congress expresses concern about the excessive delays currently experienced in the publication of the Department of State's vital series of historical volumes, The Foreign Relations of the United States. It is the sense of the Congress that the current delays must be substantially reduced so that publication of the series will occur after twenty years, and no later than twenty-five years from the date of the events themselves." The Department of State is studying what can be done to narrow the gap.

On behalf of our three national organizations, the Joint Committee strongly supports the recommendation to accelerate publication of Foreign Relations. We are aware of the formidable difficulties involved, and we recognize that this acceleration cannot be achieved without the full cooperation of many interested parties. On the other hand, we see great benefits to the United States from publishing a comprehensive and objective record of our foreign policy. We therefore ask the Secretary of State, the

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Secretary of Defense, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Archivist of the United States, and the Public Printer to do all that they properly can to speed declassification of the necessary documents and to ensure prompt publication of the volumes. This will entail both a commitment to maximum possible openness and the assignment of sufficient skilled personnel and other resources to handle the work-loads involved. In general, for historical documents, we support the principle: "When in doubt, declassify."

Sincerely,

Nicholas C. Burckel

Nicholas C. Burckel
Chair

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